



February 14, 2014

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Johanna Guterrez, and I live in Meriden. I am testifying in support of Governor Malloy's increase in the Care 4 Kids rates. Most of the families that bring their children to me use Care 4 Kids to help them pay for child care.

I began as a licensed family child care provider nine years ago when my son was very little. Early in my career, I started going to meetings at CSEA, the child care union. Through them I learned that I was not alone with my frustration with Care 4 Kids. I also learned that I could make more money if I became a licensed group home. You see, group homes get reimbursed at a much higher rate than family child care providers. So after six years with my little home-based day care, I took the leap and expanded. Now I have 12 children in my care, have access to more professional development opportunities, and still maintain a homey atmosphere for the kids. If I had not been able to do this, I would not have been able to continue the job I love and raise my son as a single mother.

I understand what family child care is all about. You can love the job, but you also have to be able to pay your own bills. I could not wait until Care 4 Kids raised their rates so I became a group home. Not everyone can do that.

This raise will give parents access to higher quality choices for their child care. They need financial support to get ahead too. When they are less stressed about money the children benefit, and of course it makes my job easier because I don't have to charge the parents so much extra. The raise will allow me to provide a better environment for the kids, give parents more peace of mind and helps everyone feel more secure. That's a lot of good coming out of this Care 4 Kids raise, don't you think?

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